

Count Every Blessing

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/9464528) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/9464528>.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hetalia: Axis Powers
Relationship:	England/France (Hetalia)
Characters:	France (Hetalia) , England (Hetalia) , Portugal (Hetalia)
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Human
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2017-01-27 Words: 5,543 Chapters: 1/1

Count Every Blessing

by [Shachai](#)

Summary

Newlyweds Arthur and Francis - and some of the trials and perks of the recently married.

Notes

A pinch-hit for arthur-kirkixnd (on tumblr), for the 2017 FrUK Gift Exchange. One of your wishes was for ‘married life fluff’ with newlyweds, so I hope this gives you your dosage of sweetness.

Gabriel would be Portugal, and Emma, mentioned more than once, Belgium. Everyone else should be self-evident, or they aren’t that important.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

“Do you realise we have six sets of commemorative champagne flutes?”

“... *How* many?” Francis’ voice, calling from the kitchen, is muffled. Arthur can hear the kettle bubbling, and the *click* as it reaches boiling.

So: “Six,” he repeats, a little more loudly than before. Putting his chin on his hand as he takes a break from typing up *thank you* cards to eye the list of wedding gifts he has propped up by his laptop. How hasn’t he counted them all before now? And then, in case Francis may still have misheard him, in every other language that springs to mind: “*Six*. Sechs. Seis. *Seis*. Zes. Roku.” A slight pause to recall idle conversations over tea with Kiku: “Muttsu.”

Francis comes back to the living room with a tray: hot teapot, two mugs with milk already inside. It is set very kindly on the table between Francis’ current seat and Arthur’s, right as the kiss Francis drops atop Arthur’s head before he sits down again. “...Tell me that in Welsh and Gaelic and I *will* be impressed.”

“Piss off.” Arthur kicks Francis under the table - *gently*; they’re both wearing socks. “*Chwech*.”

“And?” Francis smiles, clearly amused at Arthur’s attempts to dig through the drawers of his memory in search of one of the languages of one of his siblings. Reaching for one of the twilight-coloured cards (their wedding’s colour scheme) they have already assembled to sign their names with a flourish, Francis adds, deliberately airy: “...I can tell you if you are *really* struggling, mon chou.”

Yes, because *someone* is determined to be a good brother-in-law just because he knows how easy it is to tease Arthur about his siblings. They (upon occasion) like their new brother-in-law more than they like their *brother*.

“I *know* it - no,” Arthur says when he sees Francis open his mouth, “*piss off*, I just -” he grins around a lightbulb moment, suddenly triumphant - “*sia*.”

Francis’ amusement doesn’t fade, looping like letters of their new surname on the cards: *Kirkland-Bonnefoy*. “It really says something that you are better with the languages used by your friends better than those of your own family.”

“I got French, alright?” Arthur does not so much kick his new husband under the table again as he does prod Francis’ ankle firmly with his toes. Straightening up in his seat before his laptop’s screen goes black from inactivity: “Who do I talk to more, anyway?”

“Oh,” Francis sodding *laments*, wafting another card in front of his fine-boned face like a lady’s fluttering fan, “that I married a man who struggles to count to ten in even ten different languages...”

It takes Arthur an indignant moment to do a mental tally. “...I *got* ten!”

“Two were Japanese!” Francis *would* pick at the details.

Arthur sets his jaw, saves his work, and shuts his laptop. They're not going to get any work done. "Sex. Latin."

"Darling, your private education is showing." Francis' smile is *growing*, though the way he leans close across the table towards Arthur with his lashes lowered takes any sting out of his cheek. "*Altı*," he drawls. "Turkish."

Arthur, who had been, frankly, expecting *flirting* to follow after Francis looking at him like *that*, loses the soft curl that had been beginning to move his mouth. And frowns. (Francis is going to make this a *competition*?) "*Chah*. Hindi."

"*Shesh, sáu*... And, let me think," Francis holds up his fingers to count, starts with his thumb, "*lukk*. That's Russian, Vietnamese, and Cantonese."

(Francis is going to make this a competition.)

"...Where did *you* pick up numbers in Vietnamese?" Arthur reaches for the teapot and begins to pour for them both.

Since he has set down the purple *thank you* card, Francis has to make do with a dismissive wave of his hand. "There is a restaurant I like, when I go out with Gilbert and Antonio. You're stalling."

"*Seks*," says Arthur, because he *isn't*. "That's Norwegian, and *I* like Vietnamese."

"You wish to go?" Francis has this way of fluttering his lashes that most people - who don't *know* him - assume is innocent or coy. It draws attention to his big *blue* eyes, the stunning colour under the fall of his golden hair. (Every morning is a marvel, waking up to a gaze like that on the pillows beside Arthur's.) "We should go tomorrow - and I gave you *three*, Arthur."

"I gave you ten before that!"

"The *easy* ten," Francis stresses, and Arthur makes a face at him as he sets their teapot down again with a petulant *thunk*. "And it was more like *nine*, in any case."

"Since when did *you* know any Japanese?" (That Francis will *admit* to knowing anyway. Arthur *knows* about his husband's stash of manga, buried behind the tomes of philosophy on their bookshelf.) Arthur refuses to be beaten on a *technicality*. "*Zes*, which is Flemish, and..." he hesitates, drawing a blank.

"Give up?" Francis asks, quite cheerfully, curling his long fingers about his mug. His wedding ring chimes faintly against the ceramic.

Arthur toe-prods him again. "You'd like that, wouldn't you? *No*."

Francis just as cheerfully stomps his foot on top of *Arthur's* foot. "No is not a number."

"Shut up. I've - oh, *Irish!* Sé." Arthur reaches for his own mug, and brings up his other foot so he can pleasantly start thumping the sole off of his husband's shin. He has to lean back to

do it, the chair's back pressing against the angry patch of red still spread, under his shirt, along Arthur's shoulder-blades and down his spine after their honeymoon in Seychelles. (Wrath of the sun.) "You're paying for dinner."

Francis' mouth makes a pretty moue, and he shifts his legs away under the table. "It *must* be your turn."

"Now who's stalling?" Arthur's foot is free again, and he is feeling quite smug about it. (He is a mature adult.) "And it is *not*; I paid when we went for Italian -"

Too late, he realises his mistake.

"*Italian!*" Francis exclaims, immediately taking the accidental prompt and using it. "Sei."

"You had help!" Arthur protests.

"You expect me to overlook opportunity when it comes?" Francis sniffs at him, ignoring Arthur's muttered *there's a word for people like you* to take a careful sip of his tea.

"Nevertheless, it is now your turn."

Distracted, Arthur lifts his mug up a little closer to his face, contemplating as he breathes in the steam. "... *Sittah*."

"Which is?" Francis raises an eyebrow. Very arch, that eyebrow.

"Arabic. I think." Arthur is not good at Arabic.

Francis pauses, and Arthur thinks for a moment that his husband is going to tell him that Arthur has stated something incorrect, but instead: "...Aren't *all* our numbers Arabic?"

Well. "Western. Mine was -"

"Non-western?"

Arthur lifts his leg again and thumps his foot into Francis' *thigh*. "*Eastern*."

Francis laughs, rich and wonderful, and Arthur has the vague feeling that he would like to propose to this man all over again at the same time as he really wants to strangle his husband with Francis' own designer jumper. Francis is beautiful. And annoying. And his laugh makes Arthur's stomach turn a loop-the-loop.

"*Sei*," says Francis, after he has finished laughing.

"...You already *said* sei."

"*Vrai*." Francis nods. "But *that* was Italian. This is Basque."

Arthur is affronted enough that he forgets to put his mouth to his mug when he tilts it, and almost sends scalding liquid down the front of his shirt. "Fuck you - Basque is *not* a language."

“It is a perfectly legitimate modern language -”

“It is a garbled *abomination* designed to torture the innocent.”

“No, no,” Francis takes one of his hands away from his mug again, flapping Arthur’s words away, “*that* is Esperanto.”

“That is -” Arthur stops. Thinks about it. Can’t argue. “...Okay, true.” Which means he has to accept Basque, and their little *game* is still on. “Siex.”

Francis frowns at him, clearly hunting for the word and its matching language in his mind.
“‘*Siex*’?”

“Old English.”

“... *Arthur*. Arthur, that is just *cheating* - ”

It had not taken marriage for them to know they were in it, together, for the long haul. They had been officially dating for four years (the three years of undeclared on-again, off-again before that, they didn’t count), and living together for half of that. Somehow, they had avoided killing each other in that time, rubbed up together and rubbed off some of the edges, put two lives together in one flat and lived every day learning about each other. Arthur sings in the shower. Francis warbles in the bath. Arthur is a night owl, will stay up half the night and then be grumpy about it when he has to wake up early in the morning for work. Francis just hates getting up before noon. Arthur is absent-minded enough in the kitchen he has wandered away and left numerous meals to burn. Francis *always* forgets to get the milk out of the freezer when he has used up the last of the old bottle.

There are arguments. There are make-ups. There are compromises, good days and bad. These days, more good days than bad, even if, somewhere along the line, they have both realised their flat is a *little* too small. The rent is affordable and the location not terrible, but they’re running out of room in the kitchen for cookware; Francis’ clothes are beginning to explode in colourful disarray out of the wardrobe; Arthur’s plants are crowded on the windowsill, and they have absolutely no more room for *any* more books in the home, anywhere.

It had been a Sunday: a day off work for both of them. Arthur had been up for a few hours, legs folded under him on the sofa with his laptop on his lap, drinking tea, eating through the household’s supply of Jaffa Cakes, and arguing with an idiot on the internet. (Their friend, Alfred.)

Francis had announced his presence into the waking world by knocking down all his stupid bottles of expensive haircare, bodywash and God knows what in the shower, Arthur pausing from his latest detailing of all the ways Alfred was *wrong* - that time - to listen to his boyfriend curse in fluent French and English. Arthur had accidentally knocked down those selfsame bottles enough times with his elbows that he was familiar with every single *clonk*

and *thunk* as it hit the shower floor or parts of the squidgier human body, politely waiting until the waterfall of painful chaos had finished in the bathroom before he called out: "Are you dead in there?"

"*Fous le camp!*" Francis had snapped back at him, and Arthur had just laughed and went to switch on Francis' coffeemaker in the kitchen.

In less of a mood, but still quite miffed, Francis had joined him in the living room perhaps twenty minutes later, Arthur once more distracted by his laptop. "We *need* a bigger house," he had announced.

"Houses are expensive," Arthur had said, absently reaching out with one hand to pat his boyfriend consolingly on the arm when Francis flopped down in a sulk on the sofa beside him, warm heat and fluffy bath-robe. Alfred had been being *very* stupid, and Arthur's mind had been elsewhere.

"But necessary, I think." Francis had settled back with a sigh. Arthur remembers the sigh. "We could get a garden."

"I'd like a garden," Arthur had admitted. Still bickering with Alfred. "But if you want to get married before either of us are forty, we should wait for a new house. Maybe the mortgage rates will improve."

Francis had been silent for a long, long time. Too busy typing, Arthur hadn't even *realised* - Francis had made fun of him for that *exact moment* in his speech at their reception -, only startled when Francis had said, very tentatively: "Yes."

"...Hm?" Arthur had looked up from his laptop, a little startled to find that Francis was gazing directly at him, something both very soft and very electric written in his eyes, in the tremulous smile on his face. "What -"

"I want to get married," Francis had said, and Arthur remembers feeling very cold all of a sudden, then blushing hot, red, red hot. "Shall we?"

"That wasn't -" Arthur had stammered, even more flustered when Francis had sat up, reaching over to take Arthur's frozen hand and wrap it between both of his own. His thumbs gently stroking over Arthur's knuckles. Arthur loves Francis' deft, clever hands, long fingers and smooth skin, making magic out of nothing. "I - I mean, I didn't -"

Francis had looked mildly hurt. Francis is good at *mildly*, a surface expression when there is a much deeper hurt. "You didn't mean to propose?"

"I didn't," all the air in the room had been gone, "mean -"

"Oh." Francis' thumbs had stopped stroking.

"No," Arthur had said desperately, swallowed. "Like *that*. I have a *ring*; I was going to - oh God, but not like *that*! There was a *plan*; I was going to - why on earth did you- *frog*, are you laughing at me?!"

Francis had been. Francis had been laughing - in relief, he admits later, and happiness and genuine amusement at Arthur turning redder than a tomato and tripping over his own tongue - and Arthur had just groaned *oh God* at him, unable to pull away from the humiliation though he had tried to cover up his face with his one remaining hand.

His other hand had been given over entirely to Francis, squeezing Francis' hands *back*. "Will you at *least* let me go get you your ring?"

Francis had shooed him away to fetch it, still laughing, and managed to calm himself long enough for Arthur to get down on one knee and actually propose to him *properly* - even though Arthur had then finished it up with a wry: "You know, it's very hard to take this seriously when I can see up your bathrobe?"

Francis had put his bare *foot* in Arthur's stomach for that, and then sank to his knees to the floor so Arthur could put the ring on his finger, his arms around Arthur's neck immediately afterwards, his mouth still hooked in a helpless, happy smile when Arthur had caught it in an elated kiss.

And so, they had been married.

After the honeymoon, there are gifts crowded *everywhere* in their little flat, and a great many cards to send out in thanks. Arthur quite likes the cards: purple twilight background, gold and black accents, a red rose and white lily to decorate. The same as their wedding invitations, and the flowers and colours they had used for the wedding.

Arthur had wrote a list of who had given them what at the wedding, and so it is Arthur who types out the actual *thank you very much for your gift of X* content for the cards, filling in the template he had made earlier. He prints them out, and Francis cuts them out and sticks them onto the fancy background. Signs their names, and puts the card in the correct marked envelope. Very domestic.

And quite dull.

It's the polite thing to do, but it *still* doesn't help them find a home for all their new things that they're thanking people for. Sitting at the table making their cards, Arthur and Francis are surrounded by towers of *stuff* and the faint feeling of despair. Big hearts, little home; Francis too quick to adore something elegant and Arthur a hoarder by nature.

Both sets of their parents had given them money to help with the wedding, Arthur's parents adding a silk-bound wedding photograph album and an engraved silver cake-knife for their wedding cake, and Francis' parents buying them the most expensive pair of commemorative champagne flutes they'd received, the glasses engraved with their names and the date of their wedding, strands inside the stem twisted in violet and gold.

Francis' little sister, Monique, had given them a new crystal vase and part-paid for their wedding cake - which had had the rest of its costs covered by their friends, Matthew (who had also given them a set of carved wooden coat-hooks shaped like maple leaves), and Emma, the latter of whom had *made* the cake.

Arthur's siblings had given them a traditional wedding horseshoe and a pair of new wellington boots each (Erin), a huge and tremendously fluffy tartan blanket and two steel hip flasks (Iain), a set of engraved silver spoons and a fancy fruit bowl (Owen), a pair of mugs - marked *I Do* and *I Do As I'm Told* - and a stack of large chocolate bars (Michael), and a pair of matching purple silk ties (Peter).

Gabriel, who Arthur had asked to be his best man, had given them a beautiful ceramic dinner set, white with scalloped edges and decorated with tiny red and blue flowers, and his brother, Francis' best man, Antonio, had given them a traditional lace tablecloth and gift cards.

Emma's brothers, Wil and Tomas, had bought them new large suitcases for their honeymoon - along with a bottle of suncream, deliberately chucked at Arthur's head -, and Matthew's brother, Alfred, had bought them another set of champagne flutes and matching fountain pens in green and blue.

Their friends, Ludwig and Gilbert, had given them a new slow cooker and two brightly-coloured aprons, whilst Agni had given them matching gold tie pins, and Lukas and his family had sent them a leatherbound journal each. Erzsébet had given them beer and a new radio for their kitchen, whilst Roderich had sent them a large slab of wood that Arthur had struggled to identify until Francis sighed at him.

("That is a *cheeseboard*, you uncultured heathen.")

"What's wrong with a *regular* board for cheese?"

"I feel faint.")

Some people had *made* them things - Katya had crocheted a huge blanket for their bed, and Berwald and Tino had made them a new giant bookcase -, whilst many had simply given them money in decorated envelopes - their friends, Kiku, Lovino, Feliciano and Ivan chief among them (Ivan had also made them a fruit cake).

Still, on top of that, they had gained *four* more sets of champagne/wine flutes, a pair of matching slippers each, another set of mugs, a set of windchimes where the chimes were shaped like fish, another fruit bowl, a new wok, two fancy steel stands for afternoon tea, a set of vanilla scented tea lights and tea light holders shaped like swans and birdcages, three plaques of varied sizes with 'romantic' inspirational phrases on them, a new set of towels, a set of pewter candlesticks, a dozen photoframes of even more various sizes, and a potted peace lily.

Francis and Arthur sit curled up together on the sofa, their new fluffy tartan blanket wrapped around them both, and proceed to get very tipsy on a bottle of good red wine drunk out of what they think is the cheapest of their new wine flutes. Francis' arm warm around Arthur's waist, and Arthur's head a little sleepy on his husband's shoulder. A toast to them.

“Where are we even going to *put* all this?” Francis asks, gesturing vaguely at - well, *everything*, since they’ve dumped most of their new gifts in the living room around them. “Do we even eat enough fruit to justify two fruit bowls?”

“Three,” says Arthur, after another deep gulp of wine. He’s going to need to find the bottle for a top-up soon. “We’ve got one already in the kitchen.”

Francis groans, and lets his head loll back to hit the sofa behind it. “*You* think of something.”

“Me?” Arthur is only thinking of more wine.

“Think of it as *strategic planning* or something; you are supposed to be good at that. I cannot,” Francis has gone into his *languishing* pose, the back of his free hand flung hamtastically against his forehead, “I am *overwhelmed*. ”

Arthur lifts his head to sigh at him. “Nobody said we *had* to put fruit in them.”

“They’re fruitbowl-sized!”

“Lots of things are the same size as fruit.” Arthur cannot immediately think of anything off the top of his head - well, he can, *tennis balls*, but that is extremely unhelpful since neither he nor his new husband care much for playing the sport -, but he knows he has to be correct. “...Maybe we *should* put the new ones in the kitchen. Use one for bananas, and the other for everything else.”

“That is a t-” Francis pauses to consider it, and Arthur feels him grip Arthur’s shirt under the blanket as he sits up again, bunching up the cloth as his little finger brushes bare skin. “That is a good idea, actually.” Arthur is a font of wisdom. “We can put the old one on the side-table in the hallway, by the phone.”

“What for?”

“Anything.” Francis shrugs his Gallic shrug, a big heave that pushes Arthur’s shirt up more. Arthur begins looking for the wine bottle somewhere around their feet. He vaguely recollects they left it somewhere around their feet. “Mail, odds and ends - perhaps our *keys*, mon chéri, so I do not keep finding yours in weird places every day.”

Folded in half and digging through tartan, Arthur frowns. “You do not find them in weird places every day.”

Francis *hms* at him. “They were in the sugar tin on Friday evening,” true, “and you know on Wednesday morning we found them in my *slippers*.” Arthur can’t help *dropping* things on occasion. “Then there was the time with our sock drawer,” one time! “and another with the toothbrush holder...”

“Fine, *fine*.” Arthur can try and put his keys in the bowl on the side-table, if only to stop Francis listing every single location they have ever found Arthur’s keys after he lost them. He finds the wine, seizing it triumphantly by the neck and sitting up again.

Francis takes the wine off him, and gives Arthur the empty glasses to hold instead. “My scatterbrained spouse,” he says, because Arthur isn’t going to argue against him voraciously whilst alcohol is being poured. Their glasses full again, Francis takes his back from Arthur, chinking the two together with a smile. “*Mon trésor.*”

Arthur wrinkles his nose a little, but is pleased. “Are you saying that just because I found the wine or -”

Francis kisses him, fingers on Arthur’s jaw and - *oh*, that’s. That’s good, stained lips and softness, Arthur breathing in a little in surprise and shifting his glass. It’s funny, isn’t it; they’ve had to learn how to kiss whilst holding booze, Arthur tilting up his head against Francis’ mouth, clutching Francis closer under the blanket.

Francis has fallen ardently in love with the slow cooker. Arthur half expects to walk in one day and find his husband thoroughly seducing it on the kitchen counter, saying as much to Gabriel when they have a night out together because Gabriel has found a *new seafood restaurant* and gets enthusiastic about these things.

Gabriel likes to get judgemental about mussels. And crab. And *God help them* if the codfish is bad.

(Emma was *supposed* to have been coming out with them, but the traitor had cried off with an excuse about needing to wait in for a late shopping delivery. Arthur is strongly debating calling her later and demanding to hear the sounds of shopping being unpacked in the background.)

“Slow cookers are convenient.” Gabriel shrugs as he wipes his hands clean on a serviette (the mussels are, apparently, good here, but Gabriel has some *things* to say about the sauce) before reaching for his wine.

Arthur, nursing a bottle of cider in-between bites of his fish, just sulks. “I’m telling you my husband has taken a kitchen appliance as his mistress and you tell me it’s *convenient*?”

“His *mistress*?” Gabriel laughs, the twat almost choking on his drink.

“You haven’t *seen* them together!”

“Well,” says Gabriel. He’s smiling, and then does his very best to look like he isn’t smiling when Arthur *eyes* him warningly. “We always knew Francis was... passionate about his cooking?”

“*I will throw my lemon at you.*”

“Arthur,” Arthur puts down his cider to have another go at his fish, picking out some more of the bones whilst his *supposed* best friend attempts to be consoling, “are you *really* jealous of

a kitchen appliance? I am quite sure Francis would let you have a go with it. If you mention your concerns -”

Arthur picks out another bone. “He keeps *cooing* at it.”

“Tell him it makes you lonely, and he’d probably invite you to have a threesome with it?” Gabriel gets a well-aimed wedge of lemon to the *face*. “You are a *brute*.”

Arthur drinks... maybe a little too much. Gabriel sees him home, the two of them bumping together in the taxi, slightly stumbling up the path to Arthur’s front door.

“*Encore?*” Francis asks overhead, opening the door and having Arthur deposited somewhat inelegantly in his arms. “Again?”

“Good cider,” Arthur explains, and attempts to straighten up by clawing his way up his husband’s chest. Francis is so much broader than him; it’s really unfair. “Why are- why do you always seem taller after drinks?”

Francis sighs down at him, pushing on Arthur’s lower back to help with remaining upright. “Because, *mon beau*, you are looking up at the moral high ground.” Over Arthur’s head, he asks Gabriel: “*How* drunk is he?”

“He is still speaking English?” Gabriel offers. “We are- well, he is not *very*, I think, just -”

Supposedly solid on two feet, Arthur wobbles very dramatically, and attempts to fall sideways out of Francis’ arms. “Oops?”

“*Oops*,” Francis repeats, a lot more flatly, and helps Arthur wobble back upright. Back to their company: “*Bonne nuit*, Gabriel.”

The taxi still waiting, Gabriel goes, and Arthur stumbles his way inside the flat with Francis. He can walk, really, the world just likes to tilt slightly too much to the left, and he manages to magnificently *not* trip over the side-table (and knock the phone and bowl in its new home off of it onto the floor) by tripping over Francis instead, tumbling them both hard against the wall.

“*Arthur*,” Francis grits at him, looking none too happy since *he* is the one pressed between husband and wall, Arthur’s elbows sharp in his chest.

Drawn like a moth to light, heat, Arthur just presses closer, presses his mouth a little blindly against Francis’ face, ends up mouthing his jaw, shuddering at all the points they meet. “You’re mad at me.”

“*Understandably*. ” Francis’ hands grip his forearms, a balance between them both.

“You’re mad at me,” Arthur repeats again, knows he’s digging into Francis but unable, in this moment, to help himself, nuzzling against his husband’s cheek, feeling the scratch of stubble and the tickle of Francis’ ponytail. He’s not so tipsy he can’t still talk, doesn’t know what he’s doing, but his inhibitions are down. “So, *God*, why is it so attractive? Your goddamn *face*.”

“...My goddamn face is attractive?” Francis repeats. Slowly. “Well. *Yes* -”

“Arse,” Arthur tells him bluntly, and lets his teeth scrape against Francis’ throat, hearing the jingle of his husband’s rings when he grabs at Francis’ shirt. He is - he’s still pinning Francis to the wall, isn’t he, half-straddling one of Francis’ legs. Topsy and- and *annoyed*. And in love. And being terribly uncomfortable.

And Francis is letting him.

“I love you,” Arthur tells him seriously, looks up and makes sure he’s looking at his husband’s eyes because they’r- they’re so *blue* and this is *important* - and Francis’ smile softens his face like summer.

“Come here,” says Francis and the world *drops* slightly alarmingly, Arthur tipping forwards and oh - oh, it’s a hug, his face buried securely in Francis’ shoulder and Francis warm, his arms around Arthur’s back. “My Arthur.”

“*Mine*,” says Arthur, muffled by shoulder and husband and love, and clings to him back. “We need to kill the slow cooker.”

“*What* -”

The honeymoon period always ends. Work beckons again, the daily grind - and Arthur and Francis are *ground* down after their weeks off, both of them tired after a long day, a pile of limbs and a Chinese takeaway on the sofa. TV murmuring something in the background neither of them watching, Francis trading Arthur a third of his noodles to have the last of the prawn crackers and the odd complimentary spring roll.

They could fall asleep, easily, just as they are after their late dinner, but Arthur knows fine well they’ll both both *awful* to each other and the world in the morning when they wake up with bruises, a stiff back and stiffer necks. So he kicks Francis off the sofa to go shower before bed - if Francis goes *second*, he’s pretty sure the other will just fall asleep on the sofa -, tidying up their leftover cartons and cutlery whilst the sound of water running fills their flat.

When Francis vacates the bathroom, Arthur steps in, drowning out the sound of his husband's hairdryer by ducking his head under the hot spray. By the time he gets out, bath-robe on and his own hair dripping onto the towel slung around his neck, Francis *has* fallen asleep - conked out on top of the bedcovers and taking up most of the bed.

Francis has got his hair dried and his pyjamas on, but the curtains are still open, streetlights streaming into the room and making mountains of his body, dramatic shadows that sweep across the rumpled fields of the duvet. He’s a gorgeous creature, alien in the light, and Arthur cannot help but look at him, pausing with his hands full of his own pyjamas. Face turned towards the window, Francis is cut nose and cheekbones, hair turned strange silver and gold,

and the *glint* at his throat is his engagement and wedding rings on their necklace, the chain slinking out of the v of Francis' pyjama top. He isn't supposed to wear either on his hand for work, and this is his compromise.

Getting dressed forgotten, Arthur sits on the bed at Francis' waist and watches his husband breathe. Sometimes, in quiet moments, he isn't quite sure *how* he managed to end up with this man loving him - let alone *marrying* him. Francis is... Francis feels untouchable, at times, very photogenic, very charming, very *charisma in your face* in all the ways Arthur isn't. He fills up Arthur's life like sunlight.

...That doesn't stop Francis being a bed hog.

"Francis," Arthur prods his *beloved* gently in the stomach. It's still winter; the idiot shouldn't sleep on top of the covers. "You'll freeze like this; wake up."

Francis doesn't stir.

"Francis." Another prod, to a similar response. "Sweetheart."

Francis doesn't stir, still very asleep, still, *lovely*.

Arthur ducks, slowly, and very carefully kisses him. Soft against Francis' parted lips, his hand spread for balance in the pillow behind Francis' head. Softer: "Francis?"

Francis grumbles something, shifts, his body pressing against Arthur's hip.

"Darling mine," Arthur finds himself saying, teasing, tasting the beginnings of his own smile. Kisses Francis with it again, enjoying the slow, sleepy, and half-dreaming movement of his husband's mouth against his as Francis wakes. "Come on. *Some* of us would like to get into bed tonight."

"So go." Francis' words are a little slurred, vowels shaped differently with sleep in his mouth. Arthur kisses him again, stroking his fingers back through silver-gold strands of hair to take them back from Francis' face. "*Arzur*."

"Francis," Arthur replies, amused, and kisses the corner of his husband's drowsy mouth. "You're on top of the covers and hogging the bed, love. I need you to shift."

"*Non, j'suis -*" Francis' eyes open, blearily, blink once, twice, tip up to look properly at Arthur. "Your 'air is wet."

...So it is. Arthur remembers it, belatedly, the slow drip of shower-water down his neck and cheek. Is he dripping on the bed? "You're sleeping on top of the covers."

"...Dry your hair," says Francis, sounding much more awake. And then, slightly bemusedly: "Was I getting kisses?"

"Do you wake up for anything else?" Arthur asks him, and sits up again as Francis makes a little sound of protest in his throat. Reaches for his towel to resume rubbing at his head.

Francis tugs at his bath-robe. "I want more kisses."

"Sorry," Arthur hides his face with his towel, enjoying his airy moment. "Ship sailed."

"*Arthur,*" Francis remonstrates him, and the mattress shifts and dips as Francis pushes himself up, curling around Arthur like a winding vine. One hand still at Arthur's lower back, holding his robe, and the other reaching beneath the towel, for Arthur's chin, to turn Arthur's face towards him. "How cruel you are."

Arthur leaves the towel on his head, but lowers his hands. "If you're awake now," he asks mildly, "when have I ever stopped my husband kissing *me*?"

Francis' eyes look black and grey in the poor light. "...Quite frequently?"

"In *public*, you arse. *This,*" Arthur gestures to the bedroom, to them, "is -"

Francis. Kissing him. An urgent, chaste press of his mouth to Arthur's, warm from the shower and sleep and sending a pleasant shiver down Arthur's back.

"*Ours,*" says Francis, barely a breath against Arthur's lips.

Arthur *had* been going to say *different*.

"Yes," he says instead, and smiles a little hopelessly.

Francis kisses him again.

End Notes

Arthur does use two different forms of the Japanese number six in the first section. Arthur is using both the Sino-Japanese *roku* (六) and the Native Japanese *muttsu* (六つ). When counting things, actions and events in Japanese, a counter word is used - strictly speaking, empty glasses would be counted as *rokko*.

With many, many thanks to the endlessly patient Losthitsu, who assisted with the Japanese, and pointed out any particularly weird sentence structure as I wrote this in a hurry.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!